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WHAT WILL IT MEAN TO CLOSE THE INSTITUTE?

Monterey, Vermont communities express grief and relief, look to next steps

By MADELEINE KAPTEIN & MANDY BERGHELA
Editor in Chief & Managing Editor

COURTESY PHOTO/ MIIS

Approximately 130 faculty and staff will in Monterey will lose their jobs as a result of the Institue's closure.

With the decision to shut down several programs at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (MIIS) within two years finalized, Monterey-based faculty, staff and students are mourning the future of their school. On the other side of the country, the Vermont community has commended the choice, but is left wondering what the pivot will really change in the short term considering the college's persisting budget deficit. Administrators have decisions to make about what is to come for two campuses that, though thousands of miles apart, have been intertwined for 20 years.

For many at MIIS, the announcement was a shock. Professors of Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies Jeff Knopf and Avner Cohen, who have both taught at the graduate school for more than a decade, said the August decision to close the Institute was not what they expected.

The faculty were well aware that the Institute had run deficits for years, that enrollment had dropped to an all-time low and that their Vermont colleagues had advocated to close its doors. Knopf's introductory courses that once filled 50-seat classrooms now use only about two-thirds of the space, he said, and Cohen recalled watching the student population of approximately 750 when he arrived in 2011 shrink overtime to its current full-time enrollment count of under 500, a decline exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Still, many believed that MIIS had time to facilitate a revival. A four-year business plan was underway in its second year, aimed at stabilizing finances and boosting enrollment.

"We thought that the commitment to this campus, to its potential, was still there

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MiddSafe hotline shuts down due to lack of student use

By KAI ARROWOOD
Contributing Writer

The Center for Health and Wellness (CHW) recently announced the termination of MiddSafe, a student-run mental health and violence prevention hotline that has been in use for almost a decade. Director of Health and Wellness Education Madeline Hope cited a decrease in student use as the reason for its termination. With the program Mental Health Peer Educators (MHPE) also ending due to low participation rates, CHW has introduced a new group called PEAR (Peers Educating for Affirming Relationships).

The hotline was a core part of Middlebury's mental health support for the majority of its duration, offering 24/7 peer guidance on issues such as sexual assault, dating and domestic violence. The past few semesters, however, have seen a decrease in callers of over 90%,

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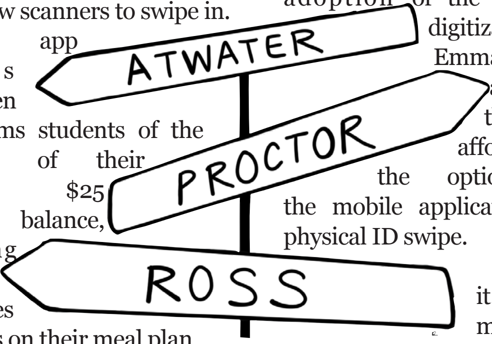
Dining Services introduces new meal swipe app, food options on campus

By LILA DELUCA
Contributing Writer

Multiple changes to dining facilities on campus have launched this semester, from a new app to scan into the dining halls to the opening of the cafe "So-Full Sisters" inside BiHall to an expansion of the Grille's offerings.

Previously, all students hovered their plastic ID cards over scanners to check in to the dining halls. Now, they can alternatively use the new app, called GET Mobile. After signing in using facial recognition technology, they open a barcode section of the app and place it in front of new scanners to swipe in.

The app displays a screen that informs students of the remainder of their automatic $25 declining balance, remaining guest meal swipes and swipes on their meal plan in general. Even for students on an unlimited meal plan, the count begins at 2000 and decreases with each swipe they make. A full history of students' meal swipes from before the app was introduced is also available.



Director of Dining Services Dan Detora said that GET Mobile will digitalize the dining experience for students while making the scanning process more efficient for employees. Students may not realize that ID cards place a significant burden on the Food Service office, he explained.

"It is a big ask to print 2,700 cards for the students in the academic year, and the language schools come in and we print all of those cards, so it's a huge amount of work which we are trying to eliminate in two years or so," Detora said.

Dining Services is working with the college to end the need for printing physical student IDs entirely, meaning access to dorms may also be digitized.

Detora said that students shouldn't feel obligated to download the app, but noted that widespread and consistent adoption would bolster this "trial period" for Dining Services.

Some students expressed positive feedback about the adoption of the app and the digitization effort. Emma McNealy '28 appreciates the flexibility afforded by the option between the mobile application and the physical ID swipe.

"I really like it. I can see how many swipes I have, I can see how many guest swipes I have and I can see how much of my declining balance I have left. But at the same time I think it is nice how I can also use my ID if I want," McNealy said.

Liv Fernandez '27 agreed. "I don't mind it. It is nice when I forget my ID card and it's very easy to use and I haven't had any issues with the app not working," Fernandez said.

Some students, however,

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$13 MILLION RENOVATION TO STEWART HALL FURTHERS ENERGY2028 INITIATIVE

MADELEINE KAPTEIN/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Renovations to Stewart Hall are underway as first years are alternatively housed in the old and new Battell Halls.

By LUKE POWER
News Editor

Over the summer, long-planned renovations to the first year residence Stewart Hall began. The renovations will update aging facilities in the dormitory as well as support Middlebury's Energy2028 initiative by installing an energy-efficient geothermal HVAC system.

In an email to The Campus, Associate Dean for Student Life AJ Place said that renovations to Stewart are planned to finish come springtime.

Approval from the Board of Trustees for the Stewart Hall renovations came in a Feb. 2025 release that emphasized the need to update old infrastructure and support Energy2028 initiatives. The report also mentioned the school's ability to house students in both the new and original Battell Halls for the 2025-2026 school year before the original Battell is torn down as a reason to proceed with the renovations.

Energy2028 is Middlebury's long-term initiative to source 100% of energy from renewables, reduce energy consumption by 25% by 2028 and divest the endowment from fossil fuel investments by 2032.

The work being done to Stewart is part of a larger series of building-by-building renovations seeking to maximize energy efficiency and reduce campus carbon emissions. Similar work has been completed on Munroe Hall, Warner Hall and the Christian A. Johnson Memorial building, according to a 2024 midway report on Energy2028's progress.

However, Stewart Hall will be Middlebury's first 100% geothermal energy building on main campus, contributing significantly to Energy2028's progress, according to Place.

Sustainability Solutions Lab intern Isabella Aroesty '26 described the geothermal HVAC system and stated that it will decrease the hall's energy usage.

"Stewart Hall just had a Geothermal Heat Pump (GHP) system installed this past summer, meaning it will no longer be primarily heated on the district steam system. This system will reduce energy consumption by using thermal energy from the ground to help heat + cool the building," she wrote.

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LOCAL

Alumni take on public leadership roles in Middlebury

By KATRINA SCHWARZ

Vergennes Laundry to move down the block

By IZZY RONDA

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OPINIONS

The humanities belong in every environmental degree

By THOMAS RICHARDS

Responding to MiddSafe's end

By FORMER MIDDSAFE ADVOCATES

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ARTS & CULTURE

Le Petit Salon exhibit debuts in college museum

By MAYA ALEXANDER

Welcome to the Zoo: WRMC's SOS Fest

By NORAH KHAN

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SPORTS

Men's soccer grinds out two wins to start season

By THEO MANIATIS

Men's golf cards a top-three at the Duke Nelson Invitational

By KANAN CLIFFORD

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MULTIMEDIA

An ode to aunties

By JUNE SU

In my return this year to my parents' motherland, each meal was both an incredible joy and a marathon of appetite. For two weeks at the end of summer, I pilgrimaged to the two sides

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$13 MILLION RENOVATION TO STEWART HALL FURTHERS ENERGY2028 INITIATIVES

MADELEINE KAPTEIN/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Renovations advancing Energy2028 have also been done to Munroe, Warner and Johnson in recent years.

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Facilities were unable to specify by what amount energy usage and carbon emissions are projected to decrease as a result of the Stewart renovations.

> “This system will reduce energy consumption by using thermal energy from the ground to help heat and cool the building.”

Throughout the year, they have completed several small projects that will further Energy2028.

“Facilities is doing a fantastic job of doing the smaller, less appealing retrofitting projects that will help us meet our Energy2028 goals, such as changing lightbulbs and monitoring energy usage,” Tara Federoff, assistant director of communications and outreach at the Franklin Environmental Center at Hillcrest Tara Federoff said.

For an overall Energy2028 update, in the 2024 report, energy usage from renewables had risen from 59% in 2019 to 72% in 2024. Energy usage is now down 12% from 2019, with the opening of the new Battell Hall — which is far more energy efficient than the original — and the Stewart renovations expected to further decrease campus-wide usage.

The endowment’s fossil fuel exposure has dropped 34% since 2019, down from 5.2% in 2019 to 3.4% in 2024. Divestment from fossil fuel related investments is on schedule to be completed by 2032.

More renovations to Stewart include “new windows, the addition of an elevator and updated life safety system, a new kitchen for the lower level game room, and new bathrooms which will copy the new Battell style of individually contained units that include a toilet, shower and sink along with some community sinks,” Place wrote.

Further changes will focus on making the residence hall more accessible. The building grade will be changed, making the entrance on the East side of the building wheelchair friendly. Some rooms will have widened doorways and the lower game room will be made accessible with a ramp. Public bathrooms, the laundry room, custodial closets and storage rooms will also be reconfigured with accessibility in mind, according to Place.

Floor layouts and individual dorm rooms will be mostly unchanged with the exception of replacing inefficient windows. First floor office space will grow slightly, with one dorm room converting to an extra office.

MIDDLEBURY ENERGY2028

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Dining Services introduces new meal swipe app, food options on campus

COLE CHAUDHARI/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

A new digital ID scanner outside of Ross Dining Hall.

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contend that it can be annoying to have to wait for the app to load.

“I don’t like the app because it creates a backup at the door… However, I do like it because I don’t have to carry my ID,” Macy Sweeny ’28 said.

Some employees at the dining hall check-in desks have found the app to make their jobs easier, including Lauren Sobczak ’28, who works at the Ross Dining Hall check-in.

“The app is allowing me to engage more with people physically coming into Ross instead of worrying about the system. At the beginning of the dinner rush in Ross, I’m so focused that the [ID card] system is up to speed that I can’t say hi to people I know,” Sobczak said.

She noted that the app has expedited the scan-in process.

“When two people would scan in [using ID cards] at the same time it would take a few seconds for the system to reload,” Sobczak said. “Now I like how students can use both, but there are definitely significantly less people trying to use their IDs.”

Aside from GET Mobile, the cafe So-Full Sisters moved from their initial location in a food truck outside the front of BiHall in the spring to inside the building on the ground floor. They sell Americanos, cold brew, matcha, specialty fall drinks like pumpkin spiced lattes, banana bread matcha and breakfast items, such as egg sandwiches. There is often a line in BiHall formed by students queuing up to order.

“The prices are competitive with Crossroads [Cafe], but it’s better than Crossroads,” Victoria Quagrello ’28 said.

Detora said that dining was excited to transition So-Full Sisters to their indoor spot. It has essentially taken the place of the former Midd Express location in BiHall, he noted. The business leases the space from the school and is an independent operation distinct from other dining services.

On the other side of campus, “Community Table” at the Grille launched during lunch hours from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. this week after midday meals in the restaurant space were completely unavailable last year. However, Detora clarified that “Community Table” is not the same as the regular Grille. Take-out is not an option, and this week, the menu was limited to only two items.

“You are not going to be able to go during lunch and get a ‘Dr. Feel Good.’ There will be no take out — eat-in only — because the goal is to promote communal eating,” Detora said.

“Community Table” will aim to offer a menu of items featuring locally sourced food from farms around Addison Country and to promote communal eating not only among students, but also among the over 200 individuals on the faculty/staff meal plan.

Detora stressed that like the GET Mobile app, “Community Table” is still in a trial period and the student marketing team for Dining Services has plans to increase its marketing for the service in a few weeks. GET Mobile may also eventually allow students access to late-night mobile ordering at the Grille.

PHOEBE AN/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

So-Full Sisters operated out of a food truck on campus in the spring. Now, they are located in a cafe inside BiHall.

TASHI SHERPA/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The Grille’s new lunch hours offer a limited menu without a take-out option.

MIDDSAFE HOTLINE SHUTS DOWN DUE TO LACK OF STUDENT USE

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MADELEINE KAPTEIN/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The Center for Health and Welleness building houses Health Services.

according to Hope. Participation in MHPE programming has similarly plummeted, dropping by 80%. Hope, in her Sept. 11 opinion piece for The Campus, stated that the shift "[made] it challenging for advocates and peer health educators to practice their skills."

MiddSafe was founded in 2017, pioneering Middlebury's mental health support boom at a time when resources were sparser on campus. Over the past few years, Middlebury's wellness team has grown, with the number of nurse practitioners, violence prevention staff and sexual assault nurse examiners having more than doubled since MiddSafe's introduction, according to Hope.

TimelyCare, a 24/7 telehealth option that previously existed in addition to MiddSafe, will assume the student-run hotline's former function. Hope claimed in an email to The Campus that MiddSafe's cancellation isn't due to its failure, but its increasing obsolescence in light of drastic increases in support staff. She wrote that many campus groups have also changed their mental health policies to better provide for struggling students in recent years. As Middlebury's mental health infrastructure has blossomed, the need for a central hotline decreased commensurately, Hope and CHW staff believe.

"Sunsetting the program in 2025 is bittersweet," Hope wrote. "The program and the participants in it were an important resource for Middlebury students when professional staff resources were less available than they are today."

However, some students believe that the hotline was underutilized due to a lack of awareness rather than a lack of necessity.

MiddSafe was a way for students to access school-specific, anonymous and nonjudgmental mental health support. Its members, called MiddSafe advocates, became state certified rape crisis workers through a two week intensive training before the start of the school year. Compensated with a stipend of $500 per semester, each member took on three to four half-week shifts a term, during which they kept a designated MiddSafe cellphone with them at all times. When on duty, they were required to be available to answer the phone 24/7, remain within 20 miles of campus and stay sober.

Hope described MiddSafe advocates as "bridges" between students and professionals, creating a peer-to-peer relationship that could lead to more serious support for a caller.

CHW manages dozens of niche programs, leading some students to feel lost in a sea of emails and posters.

"There's so many different, small things," Julia Randolph '28 said. "It doesn't feel streamlined."

Annika Milliman '25.5 was a MiddSafe advocate for three years and co-chaired the program last year. She said that while she and other members did notice an overall decrease in calls, there were sometimes as many as five or six in a week. She attributed the decline to a lack of a consistent staff supervisor to help promote the hotline.

"In my entire time that I have been a MiddSafe advocate, I've had about four or five supervisors and there has not been consistent messaging or promotion of the MiddSafe hotline across campus," Milliman said. "It's hard to maintain a presence on campus when there isn't someone there constantly trying to promote this resource."

Milliman said her experience with MiddSafe showed her the importance of accessible peer support on campus. TimelyCare employees, she noted, while trained professionals, could be based anywhere in the country and are not familiar with life at Middlebury.

"It's very different to talk to someone who is 50 years old and in, let's say, Oklahoma, than talking to a 20 year old who has been in your shoes and has an understanding of Middlebury College, of campus culture, of campus resources, specifically trained to help provide support in the [college] community," Milliman said. "It's less intimidating."

Milliman said that she and other MiddSafe advocates had been in conversations with staff about how the MiddSafe hotline might look different this year, but were not asked to weigh in on the decision to end it.

The cancellation of MiddSafe came as a shock to Aida Worku '25.5, although she was not personally familiar with the hotline.

"It feels good to know that there are more resources available. But yeah, it's kind of shocking that it got shut down," Worku said.

Shepherd Lea '27 echoed Worku's concerns, specifically because MiddSafe was the only hotline on campus that was student-run.

"If it's student-run, then it's people who really want to be there and genuinely believe in what they're doing," they said. "[The students] probably understand the same pressures that you're experiencing."

Both Lea and Worku mentioned residential staff as an alternative form of peer support as well as on-campus counseling, although Lea said that appointments can be difficult to schedule.

CHW is in the process of tailoring their programming to shifting student needs. Focusing their attention on proactive prevention and relationship violence, the center will continue to emphasize the philosophy of "Green Dot" and organize trainings to promote bystander intervention.

For now, Middlebury students that would've been interested in MiddSafe can involve themselves with PEAR. Struggling students have both Addison County and TimelyCare hotlines available for on-demand counseling and can schedule appointments with on-campus professionals. Hope encouraged students who know someone who is struggling or are struggling themselves to reach out to Health and Wellness for confidential support.

"We thank callers who trusted advocates with their stories and students who shared their passion as advocates for over a decade," Hope concluded. "This is work we will miss deeply."

Editor's Note: Editor-in-Chief Madeleine Kaptein '25.5 contributed reporting to this article.

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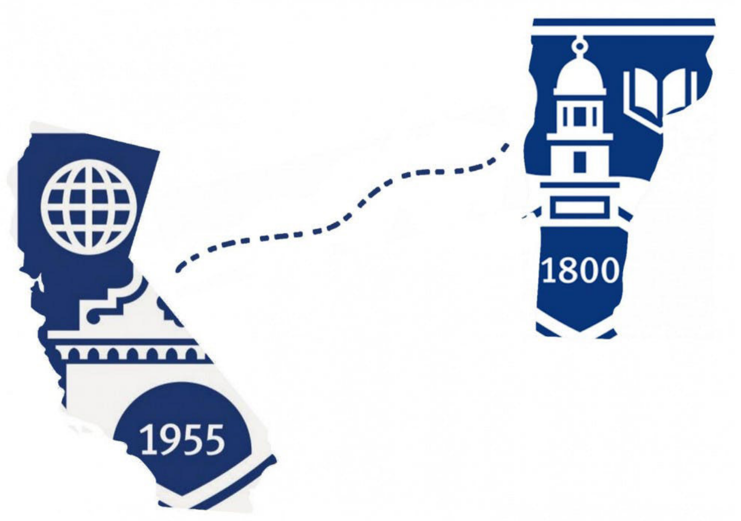
What will it mean to close the Institute?



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despite the fact that we were bleeding," Cohen said. "We were stunned."

Jeff Dayton-Johnson, vice president for academic affairs and dean of the Institute at MIIS, said that besides noting the Institute's failure to reach certain quantitative metrics outlined in the business plan quickly enough, he thinks the Board of Trustees took the recent pressure on higher education by the Trump administration into consideration when making their decision. Federal funding and enrolling international students are essential to keeping the Institute afloat, he said.

MIIS employs approximately 130 full-time faculty and staff that will lose their jobs as a result of the closure, releasing them into a limited job market in the Monterey area and in higher education at large.

"I don't want to pretend it's going to be an easy adjustment for any of us," Dayton-Johnson said.

Faculty at MIIS are not tenured but are on contracts of up to six years, providing them with job security until that contract expires. Those with contracts that extend beyond June 2027 will be reassigned and compensated until their allotted working period is over, but the nature of those reassignments are yet to be determined, according to Dayton-Johnson. Knopf said he thinks most professors will begin looking for new jobs right away, given the highly competitive higher education job market. They could leave their positions at MIIS before June 2027, even if they teach a program's required course.

Some staff have already received notice of their termination with four months notice and more will receive the same news soon. Dayton-Johnson declined to give a count for the first round of layoffs, but said that the first positions to be eliminated will be those that are no longer essential, such as admissions staff. Jobs in areas such as career services and facilities will remain until the very end, but he said that fewer staff across most departments will be necessary because the number of students at MIIS will gradually decrease over the course of the next two years as they complete their degrees. By the Add/Drop deadline for courses on Monday, 14 students had canceled their registration for this semester.

None of the staff members The Campus contacted for this article responded to requests for interviews, which Knopf speculated reflects their worries about being terminated early.

Some Middlebury-based staff also work to support programs in Monterey, and will therefore be able to continue this work as long as necessary. However, this relationship goes both ways: Some Monterey staff are essential to Vermont operations.

"We've been undergoing a process of integration of operations between the campuses for more than 10 years, so untangling that is going to be complicated," Dayton-Johnson said.

There are some joint Bachelor of Arts/Masters of Arts degrees at MIIS that take longer than two years to earn, placing students who have just enrolled in these programs in an unexpectedly difficult situation. Dayton-Johnson clarified that plans are in the works to accommodate these students, which may include changing requirements or offering extra J-Term or summer courses.

As administrators weigh logistics, faculty in Monterey described a community in mourning and uncertainty. Knopf said that the mood on campus had been on the incline since returning to in-person instruction after the Covid-19 pandemic forced remote programs. But now, they are hurting.

"For me, the most important thing is that this will be a loss for the world, because the contributions we make globally won't exist anymore after we are closed," Knopf said.

The budget cuts that shook the Middlebury community in Vermont in the spring, particularly employee retirement benefit reductions, are what sparked protests and calls to close the Institute. At a faculty meeting at the Bread Loaf Campus on Sept. 5, college President Ian Baucom addressed those cuts in the context of his and the Board of Trustee's decision on the closure.

"Our budget is still strained," Baucom said. "But with the painful actions of the spring and the decision to wind down our programs in Monterey, we are closer than we have been in a long time to getting our budget balanced."

Laurie Essig, professor of gender, sexuality and feminist studies and a member of Middlebury's American Association of University Professors (AAUP) chapter, helped write the Sense of the Faculty Motion passed in May calling for the closure of MIIS. She said that while she was gratified to see the college take this important step towards improving Middlebury's finances, she does not think it will result in employee benefits being restored.

"I certainly am sorry and very concerned for our colleagues out there, and I would love to see a plan for converting this financial albatross into at least a net zero cost," Essig said. "Continuing the program for two years with no definite plan of selling it or converting those assets into something that's not costing Middlebury money means that it's going to cost another $25 million over the course of the next two years."

She thinks some employees who will be laid off from MIIS could be rehired to fill shortages on the Vermont campus in understaffed areas such as the library or lab sciences.

Knopf noted that he and other MIIS community members were taken back by the expressions of celebration expressed over the closure on social media.

"I've already had conversations with some of our students who are very hurt by that, and it's been disheartening," Knopf said.

"The legacy of MIIS will endure," Dayton-Johnson said. "Even after we stop giving classes, the work that our tens of thousands of alumni... will continue to do us proud in the wider world, in order to embrace this extraordinary academic community during these two years while we still have it."

Twenty years after graduation, alumni take on public leadership roles in Middlebury

By KATRINA SCHWARZ
Senior Local Editor

VOTER HALL
Built as a Chemistry Hall and named in honor of Perley C. Voter, Professor of Chemistry
1913
Vote
MEGAN JAMES
ctboard
ELL
Whelan
st
ACSD
ARD

STEVE JAMES / THE ADDISON INDEPENDENT

James '05.5 and Whelan-Wuest '05.5 stand with campaign signs outside of Voter Hall.

Almost 20 years after their graduation from the college, Megan James '05.5 and Ellen Whelan-Wuest '05.5 have become involved in Middlebury's public life. The pair, who were senior year roommates after meeting through the Middlebury Miscords, a women's acapella group at the college, have been elected to positions on the Town of Middlebury Selectboard and the Addison Central School District (ACSD) board.

James, a New Jersey native, spent time in California and New York prior to moving back to Vermont to report for the Addison Independent, where she had previously worked right after graduating. A career journalist, she also wrote for the Vermont publication Seven Days. James now works as a content producer for graduate programs at the University of Vermont (UVM).

"I just really loved the community in Middlebury. I don't know if I would have been able to name that back then, but now I can see that I loved that feeling of connectedness in this small town," James said.

This sentiment is echoed by James' decision to run for the town's Selectboard, of which she became a member six months ago. When one of the two female members of the seven-person board stepped down, she was contacted by Vermont State Senator Ruth Hardy, who encouraged her to run for the position.

James shared that she was hesitant to join the selectboard initially due to doubts about her ability to properly execute the role, and concern that her role as a local reporter at the time would conflict with her selectboard responsibilities. However, with support and encouragement from Whelan-Wuest and other former members of the selectboard, she chose to take the plunge.

"I had an attitude that I couldn't do that, I am too busy and not qualified enough, maybe I am not smart enough, and maybe I don't care in the right way and don't have the right opinions," James said. "Now, I know that was just noise and bluster and none of it is true."

Whelan-Wuest, originally from Chicago, worked in Barack Obama's senate office following her graduation from Middlebury and ultimately contributed to his 2008 presidential campaign. She also spent some time in New York in the office of a Brooklyn-based State Senator Daniel Squadron before obtaining a Masters of Public Policy from Duke University.

"Having all of those experiences made me realize that I didn't want to work in politics so much as policy… I got really interested in criminal justice policy and just found my way into that path," Whelan-Wuest said.

Now, after moving back to Cornwall eight years ago, Whelan-Wuest is the Deputy Division Director at the Council of States Government Justice Center, a non-profit that works on criminal justice policy across the country. Whelan-Wuest also serves as an Addison Central School District (ACSD) board member, a position she won in a 2023 election.

"Public schools educate children, but they also provide kids with food and emotional support," Whelan-Wuest said. "It just felt like a place to put some of my time and energy to be more plugged into a community."

She shared that she enjoys working in Vermont politics, having previously worked in big cities like New York and Chicago, partially due to its positive and impactful nature.

"100% the best part was being able to sit down [with community members] and say, what is important to you?… That to me was by far the most energizing and exciting thing," Whelan-Wuest said.

After her variety of political experiences, Whelan-Wuest believes that the best type of politician is one who can really listen and learn from other people. Both she and James spoke about the internal pressure they faced about forming concrete opinions prior to running for office, and the subsequent realization that while a platform is important, so is keeping an open mind.

"Ultimately, the job you do when you are on any kind of board, whether it is being the governor or selectboard member or anything in between, is you have to work with people. So, you need people who can work together," Whelan-Wuest said.

She also explained that local politics affects people's daily lives in tangible ways, despite not garnering the attention that national politics does. From improving wastewater systems to amassing a budget, Whelan-Wuest highlighted the important work that needs to be done.

James and Whelan-Wuest both believe that their four years at the college helped play a significant role in shaping the positions that they hold today, highlighting the relationships that formed during that time.

"I don't know if I would have gone ahead and done the selectboard thing if it weren't for Ellen, and Ellen is my friend from Middlebury," James said. "I feel like the most influential thing I got from Middlebury College were my best friends, and my best friends shaped me."

Whelan-Wuest said she felt that the rigorous academic environment provided by the college prepared her for the professional world by teaching her a lifelong commitment to learning.

After applying this knowledge and spending time in various cities with different professional roles, the two women believe it is essential that graduating students know that their twenties are a time of discovery.

"If you are lucky, and work hard, and have smart people in your life, you can make mistakes that you can recover from," Whelan-Wuest said. "You can make decisions that aren't the right ones for forever, but are okay for now. I just think that finding your way through is an underappreciated process."

FALL IN FULL SWING: A GUIDE TO SEASONAL ACTIVITIES IN AND AROUND MIDDLEBURY

By ARIELLA FROMMER & MANDY BERGHELA
Contributing Writer & Managing Editor

With the days growing shorter and the temperature beginning to drop, signs of fall are looming in Vermont. Each year, visitors from all over travel to charming Vermont towns, including Middlebury, to take part in the state's classic seasonal traditions. Leaf peepers, local residents and Middlebury students alike look forward to experiencing a quintessential New England autumn before the first snow flurries fall. From apple picking to scenic hikes, there are many activities both on and off campus that can help immerse you in the fall spirit.

One of the most highly anticipated fall activities is apple picking. Just a short drive away from campus are many different apple orchards, including Happy Valley, Windfall and Sunrise. Opening in mid-September to early November, the orchards are known for their wide selections of apple varieties, such as the McIntosh and Honeycrisp (great for baking) which grow in mid-September, and the Granny Smith, which grows later in October. Visitors can also expect to find a selection of other popular locally sourced Vermont goods, such as honey, maple syrup and delicious apple cider, which can be found in the orchard farm markets.

With all the apples picked, you may want to do some baking. With a variety of locally sourced ingredients at your fingertips, fall is a great time to try out some new recipes. The Middlebury Farmers Market, which runs on Saturdays at 530 Exchange Street through the end of October, has over 50 vendors, offering local agricultural products and goods to elevate your dish. The farmers market also includes many local Vermont crafts, which are great for decor.

For those interested in running, you are in luck, as Middlebury and surrounding areas have no shortage of picturesque trails. Although the Trail Around Middlebury (TAM) is open all fall, the Middlebury Area Land Trust (MALT) is hosting the TAM Trek on Sept. 21 as a fundraiser for the maintenance of all the trails circling Middlebury, Cornwall, Weybridge and New Haven. The TAM Trek has a race for everyone, including a 19-mile loop, a 10k and 5k course, and a two mile fun run.

In October, the Middlebury Maple Run takes course and draws both local runners and visitors from across Vermont, taking participants through scenic stretches of the campus, farmland and village streets at the peak of fall foliage. For those not up for 13.1 miles, the event also includes relay options, allowing friends to split the course and still join in on the fun. Top finishers will earn Vermont Maple Syrup, of course.

Vermont is known for its stunning fall views, and if running is not your forte, there are many other ways to enjoy the stunning foliage and scenic views that Vermont has to offer. There are a variety of hikes near Middlebury, such as Mount Abraham, Camel's Hump, and Snake Mountain. Middlebury students have access to clubs such as Midd Mountain Club and Fostering Inclusive Recreational Experiences, which go on a wide variety of free outings during the season with transportation included. The Middlebury Snow Bowl in Hancock will also be hosting fall foliage lift rides on Fall Family Weekend from Oct. 3-5 for stunning views of the surrounding peaks.

Halloween is a quintessential part of the fall experience at Middlebury. The Town of Middlebury will be hosting their annual "Spooktacular" on Oct. 26, a parade from the Middlebury Green into Main Street. There will be a photo booth available to show off your best costume and candy along the way from shopkeepers and volunteers.

While the arrival of fall snow may impede plans to hike, skiers can often get early-season turns in by skinning up the Snowbowl, conditions permitting. Over Thanksgiving weekend, Killington Resort hosts the Stifel Killington Cup, which brings some of the world's top alpine ski racers to Vermont. The event features high-level competition, merchandise, and the chance for fans to see Olympic athletes such as Mikaela Shiffrin up close.

To enjoy fall, you may not even need to leave campus. Students can sit down on the grass or adirondack chairs after class, and maybe even make a sketch, knit, or pull out a book.

This list highlights just a few of the area's attractions this fall, but there are many more to explore and some lesser-known spots may prove to be hidden gems. Although our campus is beautiful on its own, it will do you good not to forget how much the rest of Vermont has to offer as the leaves are changing.

KATRINA SCHWARZ / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The sun rises over the Middlebury snowbowl during a fall hike at dawn.

Retro Realm Arcade presses ‘play’

By MADELEINE KAPTEIN
Editor-in-Chief

Debbie Gardner of New Haven brought her 4- and 7-year-old grandchildren to Middlebury’s Retro Realm arcade on a recent Thursday so that they could play alongside other kids. But when she spotted familiar games from the arcades of her teen years — including an original 1981 Ms. Pac-Man — she joined right in.

As the grandkids, Ander and Evelyn Demers, fiddled with foosball and manipulated joysticks to grab at stuffed animals jailed in the prize-dispensing games, Gardner gripped the plastic gun tethered to the cabinet of Big Buck Hunter. Watching eerily realistic deer prance across woodsy terrain on the monitor, she zeroed in on her objective: to shoot as many bucks as possible, without shooting a doe.

“They’re too fast. I can’t get them,” she said as her fiery sequence of shots missed the bucks but annihilated another unsuspecting doe. “It’s terrible, hunting. Terrible, I tell you.”

COURTESY PHOTO / OLIVER PARININI
Owner Christian Bloom plays Ms. Pacman, Retro Realm’s oldest game.

Gardner and her grandchildren are among the area residents discovering Retro Realm, which opened in April on Washington Street. Owner Christian Bloom, 48, of Bridport — an aficionado of 20th-century arcade games — hopes the business will fill what he sees as a void of indoor entertainment in Addison County.

Retro Realm’s single-room layout and natural lighting set it apart from the typical dark, disorienting arcade. But with about 45 games, ’80s music sounding from its speakers, reverberating digital bleeps and bloops, and the low roll of Skee-Balls shooting up a ramp, the place is as old-school as it gets.

While larger arcades usually charge per game, customers at Retro Realm pay based on time — $10 for one hour and $15 for two hours allow them to play any game as many times as desired. Parents don’t have to worry if their kids’ attention wanes in front of a game they’ve already fed coins to. There are also family deals: $30 for one hour or $50 for two hours for four people.

The 11 self-dispensing prize games are an exception. They charge per round, but Bloom keeps small consolation prizes, such as rubber ducks, behind the counter to comfort kids frustrated by a continually empty claw or merciless spinner.

Matt Larkins of Bridport comes to Retro Realm regularly with his two young children. He said he appreciates the flat-rate pricing.

“You can kind of just go around, and you don’t have to panic about money,” he said.

Bloom’s fascination with arcade games began in the 1990s, when he was a teenager on Long Island, N.Y. He and his friends hung out at small arcades after school, playing pinball and raging over the first-ever multilevel game, Rolling Thunder. He scored his first job, at age 16, at the nearby arcade and restaurant chain Chuck E. Cheese, later going on to manage arcades for large companies in Maryland, Nevada, California, Alabama and, finally, at Spare Time Entertainment in Colchester. That’s the job that brought him to Vermont three years ago.

Now, he’s back in the little leagues — Retro Realm is the smallest arcade he has ever run. Its proximity to pizza (Green Peppers Restaurant is right next door) and residential neighborhoods reminds him of the arcades of his youth.

“I absolutely love it because there can be a much more personal approach,” Bloom said. “I get a chance to talk to every dad who comes in, every mom who comes in, every kid that comes in.”

Two of Bloom’s own teenagers, Candace, 18, and CJ, 15, are his sole employees. CJ helps out with game maintenance and repairs, while Candace works in customer service, bustling around to assist visitors who may get overwhelmed by the maze of games before them.

“People have the most technical difficulties with the multicade,” Candace said, tapping on Legends Ultimate, a cabinet that lets players switch between 14 different games. These include Asteroids, a spaceship shooter game, and Crystal Castles, a game in which the player collects gems and must dodge enemies.

Initially armed with his personal collection of 12 machines, Bloom then purchased another chunk of the arcade’s current selection from a Pennsylvania company that sold off most of its games after the pandemic. He and CJ lugged 60 machines, some of which were not yet in playable condition, back to Vermont from Wilkes-Barre, Pa., in a moving truck. It took three separate 13-hour round trips.

“It was at least a good bonding experience,” Bloom said.

Their haul brought them close to what they needed to press “play” and open Retro Realm’s doors. Bloom found the rest on Facebook Marketplace, eBay and Museum of the Game, an online community dedicated to arcade games. All told, his efforts have scored him the likes of air hockey, Star Wars Trilogy Arcade, Cruis’n, Spider-Man: The Video Game, Point Blank 2 and Tekken 3.

While rarer games in pristine condition can cost thousands of dollars apiece, Bloom snags games that are dysfunctional — but restorable — for only a couple hundred. From there, he purchases the necessary parts and either makes repairs himself or calls in experts to solve problems outside his wheelhouse.

“For us here, it’s more diamonds in the rough than anything,” Bloom said. “We’re looking for something that you know is underappreciated, underused, or something that we can definitely refurbish and fix up.”

He continually expands his collection based on requests from regulars, scouring the internet for hidden treasures. He knew he was missing the classic carnivalesque game Whac-A-Mole, so when he spotted online its functionally identical cousin, Frog Frenzy, for sale in New York, he drove there the next morning to retrieve it. A pinball machine and a basketball hoop are recent finds, but Bloom is still on the lookout for a Q*bert machine and classic fighting games such as Double Dragon and Street Fighter. He just bought a Meta Quest 2 virtual reality set. Currently, it only comes out at a customer’s special request.

For Bloom, arcades, especially small ones, continue the social aspect of gaming he knew as a kid. Much of that experience has been lost to at-home, online video games in which kids can play “with” someone hundreds of miles away, he noted. But in an arcade, sharing the triumphs and defeats in person with fellow gamers is part of the fun.

“Come on, claw machine, work with me,” 7-year-old Evelyn begged, fishing with the claw for a stuffed panda, leopard or koala. Her friend had won one of the big prizes from the block-stacking game Pile Up just the week before, she said, but her own luck, it seemed, had run out.

A consolation rubber ducky would have to do.

Editor’s Note: This article originally appeared in Seven Days and is the result of the writer’s MiddWorks internship with the local media company. Inquire about a Seven Days internship at interns@sevendaysvt.com.

Vergennes Laundry to move down the block

By IZZY RONDA
Local Editor

This past August, Nadia Dole, owner of the beloved café and restaurant Vergennes Laundry, said goodbye to its original location at 247 Main Street in Vergennes. Fortunately for local residents and college students who treasure the spot, Dole is relocating just down the street to 205 Main Street and will reopen there this month.

Dole explained that her relationship with her landlords — the original owners of Vergennes Laundry and of the space — had been strained, but she was shocked to learn in the spring that her lease at 247 Main would not be renewed.

She scrambled to find a new location for her business, desperate to remain in Vergennes, but options were scarce.

Dole had put in an offer on the property at 205 Main but had not heard back from the owners of the space. While walking past one day, she decided to stop to introduce herself to the landlord that had never answered her application. After hearing about her situation, the landlord immediately told her he wanted to make it work.

“He mentioned that Vergennes Laundry was his daughter’s favorite place,” Dole said.

The new location will feature a bit more retail space than the former while still preserving the charm of the original café. Though the team is introducing fresh elements, some of the familiar benches and tables will be brought in from the old location. Menu traditions like Moroccan Nights will remain, joined by new offerings such as Bistro Nights on Sundays and Mondays. Dole is also looking forward to expanding the pastry selection, experimenting with treats like cannolis, while keeping beloved staples such as the banana bread.

Additionally, as the new location is two stories, there will be a downstairs bakery kitchen and an upstairs open-faced kitchen area, which will provide brunch and dinner to customers.

“The next day, after we closed the shop, it was full of people,” Dole said. “Some people that I knew well enough, some people that I didn’t. And they were boxing up, they were wanting to help move, and for three days the whole community was at my shop.”

From the get-go, Dole’s inspiration for the goods offered in her shop has been shaped by a mix of cultures, drawn not only from her travels but also from her childhood in France and familial background. These cultural influences appear throughout the menu, whether in the fan-favorite Turkish eggs, rotating Moroccan night specials, or the house-made pastries, sourdough, and baguettes.

Prior to Vergennes Laundry, Dole worked as a photographer with an international retreat company, leading about a dozen trips a year while hosting workshops, producing editorials, and teaching film and video.

Dole’s photography and professional background has allowed her to put a new spin on the business. Though running Vergennes Laundry is now her full-time job, Dole continues to weave her passion for the art medium and travel into her work. While she leads fewer retreats than before, she still organizes international workshops through the business for interested customers.

“We bring customers with us that will go: We did a few in Morocco and Mexico City,” Dole said.

“It is also where I get my inspiration and my sourcing for goods, so either where we sell retail or in my dishes.”

In the fall of 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dole officially purchased the gourmet food shop and bakery that initially opened in 2010, after a previously rejected offer.

VERGENNES
LAUNDRY
IZZY RONDA / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Vergennes Laundry owner Nadia Dole stands outside of new location.

> “The next day, after we closed the shop, it was full of people,” Dole said. “Some people that I knew well enough, some people that I didn’t. And they were boxing up, they were wanting to help move, and for three days the whole community was at my shop.”

Dole’s initial plan was to open after the New Year. However, as the holidays approached and many Vermont residents were unable to be with their families due to the pandemic, she decided to open earlier with hopes of offering the community a place to gather.

“The week of Christmas, I just thought, well I’m not ready, but what a gift to the community if I could just have a place where they could buy some retail stuff or just even stop in for an espresso,” Dole said.

Dole recounted how, due to Covid-19 restrictions, only a handful of people were allowed inside her newly opened shop, leading to lines that wrapped around the building. She was touched by how the early opening brought residents together, as they chatted while waiting in line for fresh espresso, and biscotti, or retail items such as butter, wine, and chocolate.

Although Dole had planned to open just briefly for the holidays before closing to prepare for a full launch as a café, restaurant, and modern-general-store, she decided to remain open, realizing how much comfort the space was bringing to the community.

Dole emphasized how her customers are at the heart of Vergennes Laundry’s atmosphere and success. Among the regulars are also Middlebury College students.

“As a Middlebury College student, I love Vergennes as a great option to go grab a drink or snack either with friends or just escape the college bubble, but still get the Vermont small town feel,” Abbey Boyd ’26 said.

Boyd is one of many students who not only enjoy the café, but also feel a strong loyalty and connection to it. Many Middlebury students have also worked there over the years, and they continue to stay connected with Dole while returning with friends and family.

“I was lucky enough to do a program in Copenhagen, and I think that their culture of coziness is something that needs to be brought into cafés and other places in the U.S. more often, and I think that Vergennes Laundry totally encapsulates that,” Boyd said. “And so I hope the new location has that same coziness that the original did.”

DREAM BIG, GET FUNNELED

Op-Ed

***Camiel Schroeder** is a member of the class of 2026.5.*

A career is 80,000 hours of decisions about where your energy goes. It is not just about building a résumé, it is about determining what your one working life will add up to. Choosing whether those hours are spent maximizing comfort or contributing to problems that shape the century is not a neutral choice. It is, in practice, the most consequential ethical decision most people will ever face.

In 2024, Gallup reported that U.S. employee engagement fell to a 10-year low, with only 31% of workers engaged and 17% actively disengaged. Consistent with this, surveys across Western labor markets repeatedly place pay and occupational prestige near the top of what workers report they care about, even though many report dissatisfaction with how well pay or prestige actually deliver meaning. That is the national backdrop we graduate into. And yet, if you look around at Middlebury or any other elite college, you will notice how many students are quietly steering themselves toward the same narrow set of paths, such as consulting, finance, or law, because those are conveniently framed as the only options worth taking seriously.

The outcome is rarely disaster; it is success that feels thinner than advertised. Landing the offer or securing the title can look like arrival, but too often it settles into a rhythm of work that is stable, well-paid and oddly empty. Clap politely when everyone around you lands the same job, then quietly accept that this, apparently, is what adulthood is supposed to feel like.

This is not because people are malicious. Goldman Sachs is not Mordor. In fact, it can be a smart bet, if you treat it as a launching pad. The problem is that most do not. Once the paychecks hit, spending quietly inflates to match them. Apartments get bigger, vacations get fancier, the golden handcuffs tighten. You would be surprised how many six-figure earners in New York find themselves living paycheck to paycheck. What began as a two-year stint to "gain skills" becomes a decade of skillfully rationalizing why you never left. Or perhaps you will, as burnout rates in finance consistently top 50–60%. Call it the industry's unofficial exit strategy.

Humans are mimetic creatures. We want what others want because it signals status, belonging, or safety. You can see this on Wall Street, in tech, and even here at Middlebury. Everyone swears they are "following their passion," but somehow those passions keep lining up perfectly with firms that send their employees in suits to Davis for coffee chats.

This paperchase is not some quirky Middlebury obsession. A study of Harvard and Stanford undergrads found that over 60% of students ended up clustered in just three industries — consulting, finance, and tech — regardless of their initial interests. Nobody arrives on campus declaring a lifelong dream of reformatting pitch decks. The funnel works subtly. The first visible signals of ambition on campus are 45 blazers packed into Axinn for Wall Street prep, the free pizza luring students into recruiter presentations, and the internships available as early as sophomore year, almost all concentrated in those sectors. Against that backdrop, ambition at Middlebury isn't something you define for yourself; it's preloaded, and you're either serious about it or you're slacking. Students experience this osmosis through steady exposure, until the ambitious option and the funnel are indistinguishable.

And here's the brutal part: You might actually be successful in some of it. You might land the job. You might check the boxes. At Middlebury, odds are you will — and then what?

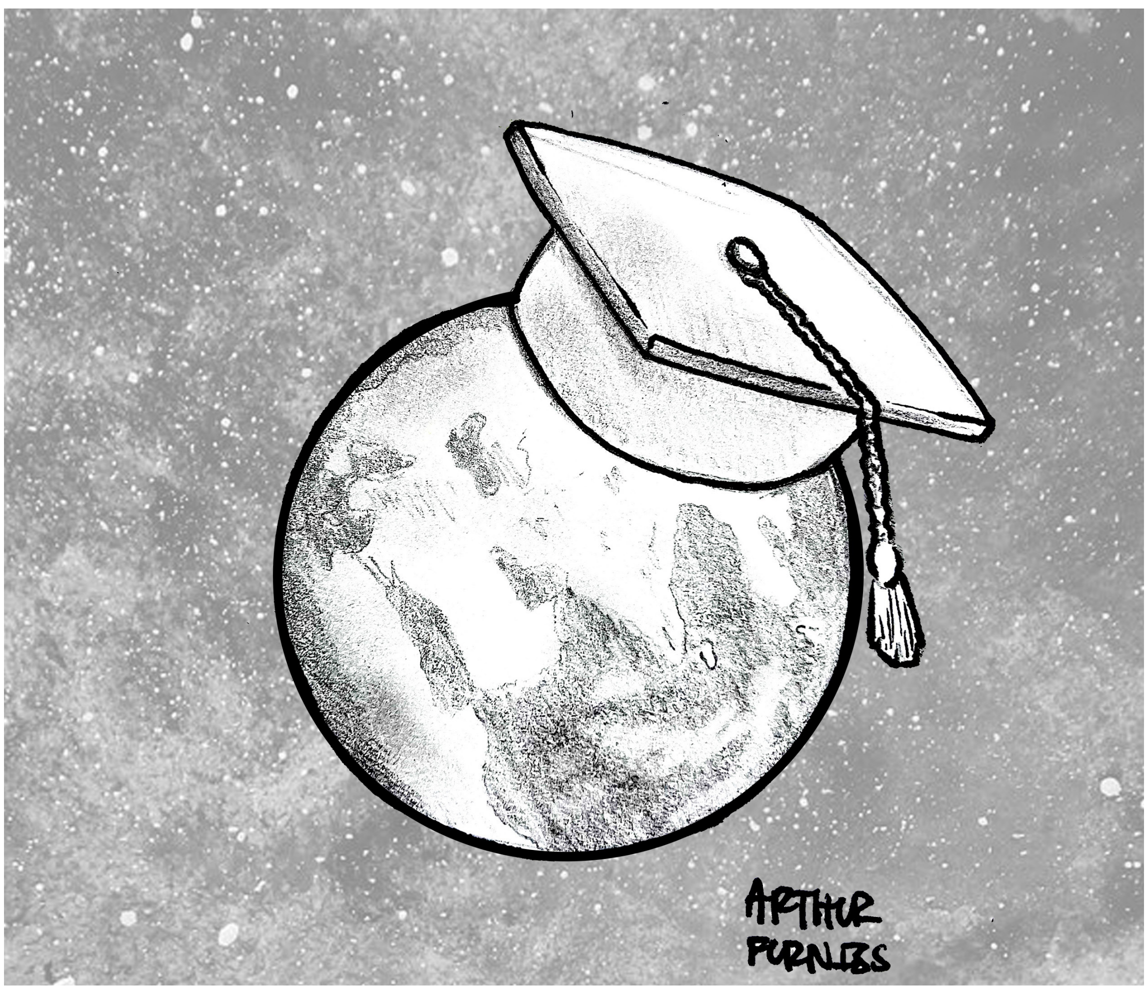
Consider what you are truly bargaining for, the supposed promise bound up in that extra 30-40,000 a year. Think about the legacy of someone who maximized earnings, names like Richard Fuscone, a former Merrill Lynch executive who retired young with millions only to face bankruptcy, or the countless anonymous hedge fund managers whose fortunes outlived their reputations. Now set that next to the career of Donald Henderson, the epidemiologist who led the campaign that eradicated smallpox, credited with saving hundreds of millions of lives, an achievement that renders any accumulation of earnings insignificant by comparison. Norman Borlaug, through the Green Revolution, helped avert mass famine and is estimated to have saved over a billion people from starvation. Michael Kremer's work on deworming showed how a cheap, overlooked intervention could transform educational outcomes for children in low-income countries. These names rarely surface on your feed, yet their impact towers over those who merely chased prestige. At Middlebury, it is worth asking which legacy you are really signing up for: a padded résumé or a footprint measured in lives changed.

The alternative?

We do not simply live in "interesting times." From the outbreak of Covid-19 to intensifying global weather extremes and the accelerating rise of artificial intelligence, the world faces compounding risks on multiple fronts. Covid-19, which killed nearly 20 million people, was only a dress rehearsal for synthetic outbreaks. If a pathogen spread as widely but killed like Ebola, with 50% fatality, the toll would be in the billions. Or at just 1.2 °C of warming today, climate change has already made extreme weather such as wildfires, floods, and hurricanes 74% more likely. Perhaps consider how leading Artificial Intelligence (AI) researchers, including Geoffrey Hinton, Stuart Russell, and even tech leaders like Sam Altman, now openly warn that advanced AI systems could pose existential risks within the next decade. Add the fact that nuclear escalation risk is higher than at any time since the Cuban Missile Crisis, and you have the greatest concentration of global risks humanity has ever faced.

This is the context in which you will spend your one career. Think back to the moments when you felt most alive. They were the moments when your presence mattered: When you stayed with a friend through their worst night, when you gave time you didn't think you had, when you solved a problem that actually lifted a weight off of someone else. Strikingly, what makes these moments powerful is that they are rarely pursued directly. You did not set out to feel fulfilled; the feeling arrived as a side effect of doing something that mattered to someone else. This is the crucial clue: Fulfillment resists direct pursuit, but emerges reliably as the byproduct of contribution.

In a century defined by existential risks and transformative opportunities, your career will be the most important moral decision you make. This is the premise of our upcoming book, How to Want Better Things, which I'm co-publishing with collaborators at Middlebury, Harvard, and Oxford through Harvard University Press. If you are interested, I invite you to join the email list or receive early drafts or the final product here, or at go/betterthings/.



REFLECTING ON MIDDSAFE'S END: WHY STUDENT INPUT MATTERS

Op-Ed

***Meghan Driscoll, Annika Milliman, Ellie Cady, Hanna Freund and Aashna Banerjee** are former MiddSafe advocates.*

On May 28, shortly after the conclusion of exams and our departure from campus, MiddSafe advocates received a letter from the Health and Wellness Education (HWE) office titled "Changes to MiddSafe & Mental Health Peer Educators – Your Eyes and Response Needed!" This email explained that for a variety of reasons, the MiddSafe hotline was going to be shut down, effective immediately, and that our group was to be merged with the Mental Health Peer Educators (MHPEs), another campus resource run by HWE, into the new Peers Educating for Affirming Relationships (PEARs). MiddSafe provided a one-of-a-kind service to Middlebury students: A 24/7 confidential hotline, staffed by students, for those impacted by sexual violence. In quietly shutting down MiddSafe, Middlebury removed a unique resource and overlooked the importance of student input, highlighting the need for greater transparency in decisions that affect the community.

As a group we were shocked, saddened, and ultimately, angered by the news of MiddSafe's closure, which we had not had any knowledge of prior to the email. We had known that call volume was decreasing, that staffing and funding issues plagued the Health and Wellness Education office, and that MHPEs were struggling with low engagement and interest from students. We had spent the spring semester discussing how to promote awareness of interpersonal violence at Middlebury and brainstorming ways to connect with our peers and ensure they were aware of the resources available to them. We had recruited a new class of advocates to be trained. In short, we had no say in the decision to shut down the hotline nor did we have any knowledge it was a decision that was even under consideration.

Throughout our time as MiddSafe advocates, both in our discussions this spring and in previous trainings, we consistently raised the idea of surveying our peers to better understand what this campus wants and needs in terms of mental health support and sexual violence prevention. We feel that student input and engagement is crucial to the success of any program that aims to improve student experience and safety, and MiddSafe was no exception. How can we support our peers without knowing what type of support our peers need? If MiddSafe is not the resource students want, what kind of peer-led resource would they find helpful? Our supervisors at HWE shut down any conversation about soliciting feedback from our fellow students.

This inability to ask questions and listen for answers seems to be pervasive within HWE. Year after year, the office offers the same events such as Be Our Valentine and Campus Trick or Treat that are often poorly attended and hardly register on the radar of the majority of the student body. Funds that are allocated towards improving student mental health supports are instead spent on well-intended but ill-conceived awareness weeks that generally lack programming that directly supports students. Student mental health support is incredibly important and the way Middlebury currently addresses it is out of touch with what the student body actually needs.

This is epitomized in the decision to shut down the MiddSafe hotline. At no point in time did HWE involve us, let alone the greater student body, in their deliberations. The decision was made by HWE and college staff and announced to advocates in an email after we had departed campus, and then not even mentioned to our peers until this fall.

As we have returned to campus and shared with our classmates that MiddSafe no longer exists, they are shocked and then angry; they are confused why a resource so essential and well-known was unceremoniously shut down without any announcement, warning, or discussion. What we have learned from these conversations with our peers is that the MiddSafe hotline served an important function beyond what was outlined on our website. Not only did we provide a 24-hour confidential peer-to-peer hotline, but we represented constant support for students in crisis. Students who never planned on using our service were comforted by the knowledge we existed. Our existence was proof that Middlebury cared. But because students were excluded from discussions about the future of the hotline and decisions were made behind closed doors, the student body has been left shocked and angry, and no one more so than us.

We know that events such as the shut down of the hotline don't happen in a vacuum and that we, as students, can not fully grasp the many factors involved in developing and sustaining programs such as MiddSafe. The Health and Wellness Education office fulfills an essential purpose on campus and we value the work they do. What we ask is for a window into how these decisions are made and a word with those who make them. We want a say. If students are to feel seen, heard, and supported at Middlebury, they cannot be ignored.

MIDDSAFE
MIDDLEBURY SAFE AND CONFIDENTIAL ADVOCATES
802-377-0239

TO MAINTAIN FREE SPEECH, START LISTENING

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

The recent uptick in political violence across the country paints a very worrying picture for the future of cross party dialogue and collaboration, both nationally and here at Middlebury. With the killing of a Minnesota democrat legislator Melissa Hortman and their spouse this past June, and the killing of conservative media personality and political activist Charlie Kirk last week, gun violence as a form of political violence is undoubtedly trending upwards. The Editorial Board condemns political violence and gun violence and calls for the broader Middlebury to play an urgent role in reintroducing and affirming dialogue and connection as a tool to mend a political spectrum that is trending towards more polarising extremes.

We recognise the wide range of political beliefs on our campus. As the news of Charlie Kirk's shooting on Wednesday, Sept. 10, spread, the cracks of a nation fractured by political divide were laid out. Middlebury and college campuses across the nation tend to skew more towards the left. However, many members of the Editorial Board were surprised by the connection that students and community members here at Middlebury expressed to Kirk after the shooting. The aftermath of his death demonstrated the growing ideological diversity on our campus. While most Middlebury students self-reported as leaning liberal in our annual Zeitgeist survey last spring, a smaller but notable portion (eight percent of respondents) identified themselves conservative. We welcome the increase in political thought from all sides, and call for students to embrace this growth as a way to understand different ideological perspectives, while maintaining a commitment to our mission statement, and community standards.

Allowing for diversity in political thought and affiliation cannot come at the expense of the individual wellbeing of our students. We note that unlike co-existing in the general public, living on a college campus entitles you to a sense of security. It acts as your home. When the college invites speakers who call for the deliberate marginalization of members of our community, they risk alienating those very students who apply and enroll in Middlebury as a way to ensure their personal safety.

Inviting "controversial" speakers to speak on moderated panels does not foster political conversation, but instead creates a top-down system, where students are made to listen to views with no chance to engage with said speakers. The college is proud of its small class sizes and the chance to engage in discussion with professors and fellow peers. This must be replicated when speakers are invited to campus, allowing us to simultaneously advocate for diversity in political thought, and for students who may feel othered by political conversation.

We also affirm that our campus should commit to freedom of speech, while actively limiting hate speech. We cannot let this commitment to free speech and variety of opinion come at the expense of the protection and the wellbeing of our community.

Many students on both sides of the political spectrum who do not typically comment on politics seemed to find an outlet to share their views as a result of the recent uptick in political violence. We call on all students to maintain this increase in political awareness, in earnest, by engaging with news, professors and their fellow peers. We call on students to create a large personal political repertoire, as we believe that it is one of the few ways to ensure safe and productive dialogue between students of all political beliefs. We call for all members of the Middlebury community to do the labor it takes to remain informed.

The U.S. is at an ideological crossroads, affecting everything from global political movements, to individual conversation and connection at our local level in Middlebury. It is the imperative of every student to continue interacting with each other. If Middlebury students can commit to these principles, they can replicate this form of community building in their wider communities, working to mend the cracks alarmingly widening.

The Middlebury Campus
Susanna Schatz

Environmental humanities belongs in every environmental degree

Op-Ed

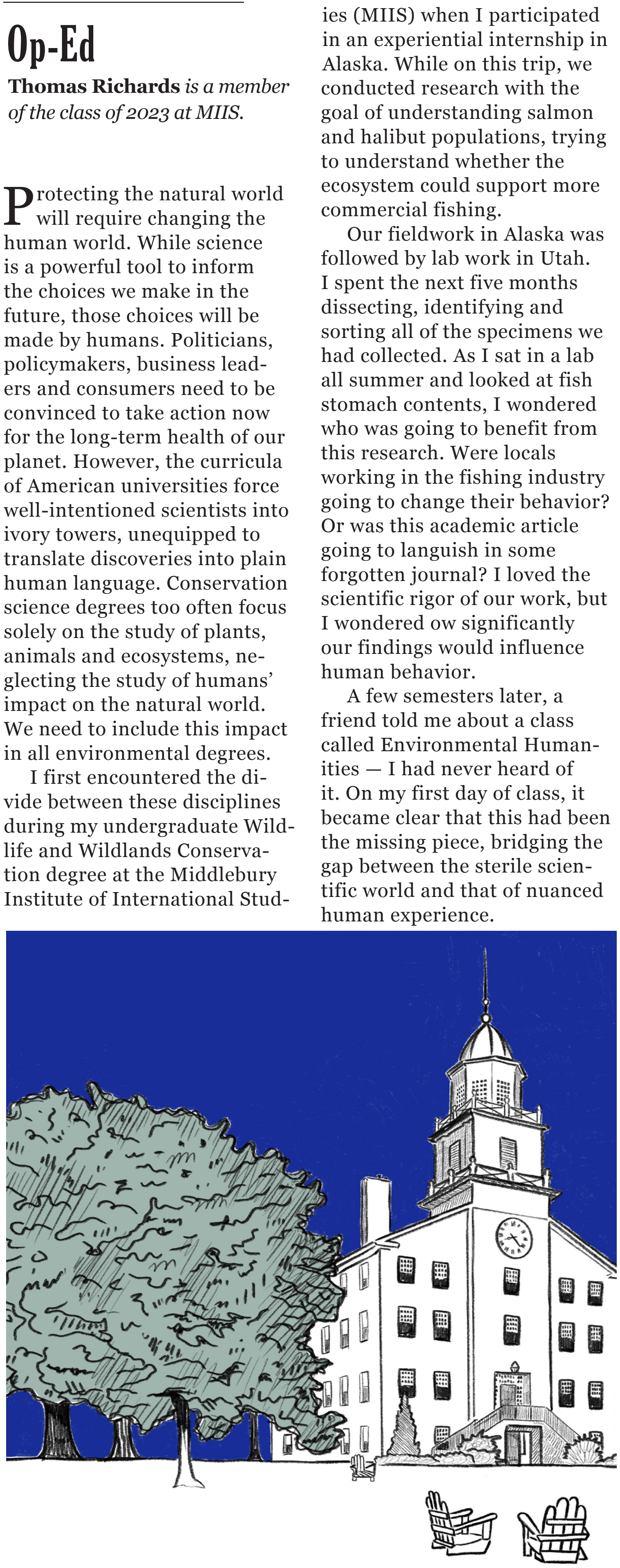
Thomas Richards *is a member of the class of 2023 at MIIS.*

Protecting the natural world will require changing the human world. While science is a powerful tool to inform the choices we make in the future, those choices will be made by humans. Politicians, policymakers, business leaders and consumers need to be convinced to take action now for the long-term health of our planet. However, the curricula of American universities force well-intentioned scientists into ivory towers, unequipped to translate discoveries into plain human language. Conservation science degrees too often focus solely on the study of plants, animals and ecosystems, neglecting the study of humans' impact on the natural world. We need to include this impact in all environmental degrees.

I first encountered the divide between these disciplines during my undergraduate Wildlife and Wildlands Conservation degree at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (MIIS) when I participated in an experiential internship in Alaska. While on this trip, we conducted research with the goal of understanding salmon and halibut populations, trying to understand whether the ecosystem could support more commercial fishing.

Our fieldwork in Alaska was followed by lab work in Utah. I spent the next five months dissecting, identifying and sorting all of the specimens we had collected. As I sat in a lab all summer and looked at fish stomach contents, I wondered who was going to benefit from this research. Were locals working in the fishing industry going to change their behavior? Or was this academic article going to languish in some forgotten journal? I loved the scientific rigor of our work, but I wondered ow significantly our findings would influence human behavior.

A few semesters later, a friend told me about a class called Environmental Humanities — I had never heard of it. On my first day of class, it became clear that this had been the missing piece, bridging the gap between the sterile scientific world and that of nuanced human experience.



THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS / SUSANNA SCHATZ

Rachel Carson's seminal book Silent Spring is an example par excellence of using skills taught by the humanities to not only change human behavior, but to spark a movement. While scientists had been warning the public of the dangers of dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) since the 1950s, it was not until Carson transformed dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane from a colorless powder into stark images of empty woodlands and fallow fields that the pesticide was banned. Her eloquent writing fundamentally shifted how we treat the natural world. Jacques Cousteau and Sylvia Earle brought the seas to life for millions, inspiring generations of marine biologists and ocean stewards through film and writing. The prose and verse of Octavia Butler and Amitav Ghosh give substance to the menacing but remote impacts of climate disasters in their works of cli-fi (climate - fiction).

While scientific knowledge is the essential foundation of these works, it is insufficient on its own to effect change. Film, music, poetry, novels, philosophy, history, art — the humanities — are necessary to make incomprehensible jargon accessible and impactful for humans without a background in hard science.

I was lucky to have found the environmental humanities. Many of my classmates never did. Stewardship of the Earth is too important to be left up to luck. At the country's top environmental and conservation science programs at Harvard, UC Davis, the University of Florida, students are not required to take any course in the arts or humanities. While some universities, like the University of Washington, have integrated at least one humanities course into their required curriculum, our universities can do much better.

Middlebury, home of the country's oldest Environmental Studies program, is ahead of the curve in this respect. The header of the Environmental Studies major page states: "Environmental solutions cannot come from one type of knowledge or way of thinking, not just from politics or chemistry or economics or history." This is exactly the mindset we need to foster in every environmental degree.

We need a generation of environmentalists who understand science and can communicate it to folks from different educational backgrounds. This connection will not be made with cold, hard science alone. Wendell Berry expressed this in typically direct language: "The concepts and insights of the ecologists are of great usefulness in our predicament, and we can hardly escape the need to speak of 'ecology' and 'ecosystems.' But the terms themselves are culturally sterile. They come from the juiceless, abstract intellectuality of the universities...The real names of the environment are the names of rivers and river valleys; creeks, ridges, and mountains."

The humanities help us understand humans. Conservation science helps us understand how to protect the natural world. The field of environmental humanities brings the two together. In a world so divided by politics, so distrustful of science, we need to bridge that gap. We need to connect people to rivers, valleys, animals and plants. As we lose species to extinction, wilderness to development, and tranquility to business, it is imperative that we help rising environmental leaders find ways to connect everyday people to the natural world. I call on leaders in higher education to require the environmental humanities in all environmental degree programs. I extend this appeal to professors and leaders at Middlebury, where this lesson has already been learned, to encourage colleagues and collaborators at other universities to follow Middlebury's example.

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The Middlebury Campus

WELCOME TO THE ZOO: WRMC'S SOS FEST

By NORAH KHAN
News Editor

WRMC's annual fall SOS (start of school) Fest brought neighs, ribbets and everything in between on Sept. 13. The show was headlined by bands Frog and Horse Jumper of Love.

The opener, Shaggo, hails from Brooklyn, NY. The feminist punk band is led by Middlebury alum Lucy Rinzler-Day '21, who described her experience playing on campus as "surreal."

When WRMC reached out to her, she was filled with excitement at the idea of playing at her alma mater.

"I was like absolutely, anything to give back to the WRMC community. Being back here has been a dream, honestly," Rinzler-Day said in an interview with The Campus.

During her time at Middlebury, Rinzler-Day studied sociology and film. She was a part of social spaces and extracurriculars like The Mill, the Mischords, WOMP and WRMC's executive board. She spoke about how her time as a student heavily influenced her music journey, citing how some of her academic readings influenced her lyrics.

"I really believe in college radio," Rinzler-Day said. "I had such a positive experience with WRMC and I feel like my friends there and upperclassmen really influenced my music taste, and overall Shaggo inspiration."

The first headliner, Frog, was an indie rock band from New Rochelle, NY. Their sound can be described as a unique alternative spin on indie folk rock; their performance was a blend of piano solos and naked, twangy vocals that bled through with emotional lyrics.

"I love his voice, it was froggy but in the best way possible, it broke at the perfect moments. They are a very talented band," audience member Kana DeCoste '27 said.

The band's upcoming project "The Count" will be released on Sept. 19, marking their seventh album since their self-titled debut back in 2013.

The second headliner, Horse Jumper of Love, or Horse Jumper, hails from Boston, MA. They took to the stage bathed in blue and purple light. Their heavy shoegaze noise rang out in waves over the crowd, some were even moved to tears by the mellow lyrics and intimate atmosphere.

"I love Horse Jumper, the best part was the last song. I cried!" audience member Devin Santikarma '25.5 said.

The artists balanced each other out: Frog erring on the side of upbeat meshed well with Horse Jumper's low and slow sound following beautifully behind.

Violet Gordon '26 is the Co-Concert manager of WRMC this year, along with Ellie Trinkle '26.

The two are in charge of allocating funds from their budget to the multiple events WRMC sponsors throughout the year, as well as determining which artists meld well with Middlebury's music sphere and coordinating performances.

"Ellie and I are two of the biggest concert fanatics on radio, we love going to shows together so we are so excited to do this at Middlebury and bring artists that we want to see to school, " Gordon said in an interview with The Campus.

"Planning a one day concert like SOS Fest can take several months and lots of communication between agents, artists, and companies," Gordon said. "It's a lot of long email chains between us and the artist's agents. For this concert, we started reaching out to artists back in May and early June."

College shows may not always have the biggest names in music, but they still provide some of the best social spaces throughout the year, WRMC Co-Presidents Neel Shah '26 and Matthew Held '26 said.

"My personal ideas around college show booking is that [the artist] should be someone that we are excited to see at Middlebury first, not to worry too much about name recognition or how big the artist is, as long as it's someone we are excited to see," Shah said.

Held agreed. "I'm grateful that there's an understanding in the Middlebury community that even though we may not have the biggest budget or the biggest artists, people trust that it will still be a good show," he said.

Since the shows put on by WRMC have no profit incentive, there's less stress about the number of people that show up. "We can just all enjoy music together," Shah said.

"It would be really cool to see people be a lot more open to going out and seeing the show, even if you only know one song," Shad said. "One of my favorite things is going to concerts where I have never heard of the artist before and being absolutely blown away by them."

Both Shah and Held have been involved with WRMC since their first years on campus. They hope to keep the organization as welcoming for others as it has been for them.

"We want to keep WRMC a warm and accepting environment. Everybody has a space at WRMC, regardless of what you are into. Weirdos are welcome, freaks are welcome, in the most loving way. College radio is all about having a space for different lifestyles and different people," Held said.

Editor's Note: Ellie Trinkle is the Senior Arts & Culture Editor. She had no involvement in editing this story.

COURTESY PHOTO/NEEL SHAH

Shaggo, Frog, and Horse Jumper of Love (top to bottom) rocked out on Mcullough Lawn this past Saturday.

A MUSICAL PLAYDATE: SOPHIE SHAO & FRIENDS

By KIARA DOOKIE
Contributing Writer

The opening notes of the trio Sophie Shao & Friends pulsed through Robinson Hall,the air charged with anticipation. The three women—cellist Shao, violinist Carmit Zori and pianist Ieva Jokubaviciute— launched into an evening of intimacy and intensity, the kind of performance where silence carried as much weight as the music itself. This balance of poise and focus reflects why Shao's presence in Middlebury's Performing Arts Series has come to mark the start of each semester, and her performance this past Saturday was no exception.

For the 106th season, she designed a program that honored the College's recently opened "Le Petit Salon" exhibit, weaving together French baroque elegance, pioneering American composition, contemporary innovation, and the sweeping emotion of nineteenth-century Romanticism. This impressive repertoire reflects more than just curatorial skill; it grows from a career marked by international acclaim.

At nineteen, she received the Avery Fisher Career Grant, one of classical music's most prestigious awards, and went on to earn top prizes at the Rostropovich and Tchaikovsky competitions while performing at major halls worldwide. Critics praise her expressive range and the dynamism she brings to even the most familiar repertoire. This international reputation made her annual return to Middlebury all the more special: the chance to experience a world-class musician not on a distant stage, but in the intimate setting chamber music was designed for.

The evening opened with Amy Beach's "Piano Trio in A minor, Op. 150", beginning the concert with elegance and intensity. The "Allegro" carried a restless energy that surged through the hall, its urgency heightened by the knowledge that Beach composed it at a time when women were expected to perform rather than create. This awareness lent the music an added depth, as if each phrase bore the weight of her determination to claim space within the canon.

The "Lento espressivo" followed with a lyrical tenderness that was contemplative yet unafraid of dissonance. The trio then launched into the "Presto, Allegro con brio" with clarity and vigor that was both exhilarating and exacting. Shao, Zori and Jokubaviciute each captured the full range of the piece with remarkable sensitivity, giving the quieter moments a luminous stillness and the surging passages a brilliance that seemed to lift the music beyond the page. Their interpretation revealed not only the refinement of Beach's writing, but also the daring ambition that once startled nineteenth-century audiences and still commands attention today.

From there, the program shifted to François Couperin's "Concerts Royaux" (1722), a deliberate homage to the French salon culture echoed in the museum's exhibit. On paper, Couperin's ornamented miniatures can seem like delicate curiosities; in performance, they became something far more alive. Each phrase shimmered with nuance, the ensemble breathing as though they shared a single set of lungs. Their restraint was its own kind of eloquence, and the hall seemed briefly transformed into a salon of another century, a space where music was less of a performance and more of a conversation.

For me, the centerpiece of the night came from Elena Ruehr's "Cello Sonata No. 2", composed specifically for Shao, her close friend. The work created a wholly different landscape, less polished, but wrestling with fragility and resilience. As Ruehr detailed in the performance's program, her compositions seek to bring narrative and emotion to audible life, an impulse that seemed to resonate in every measure of the sonata.

At times, the cello's voice plunged downward, heavy with shadow, before rising with a kind of defiance; at others, the piano pressed against it, offering both resistance and consolation. This dissonance between the two instruments felt deliberate; it underscored the unease of holding both destruction and hope, turning the music into a meditation on a world shaped by beauty and decay.

That sense of struggle became even more vivid in pianist Jokubaviciute's performance. She leaned into each note as though her body could press the sound further into being, bending toward the keys with a physical intensity that mirrored the score's emotional demands. Her playing at times swelled against Shao's cello, at other times flowed seamlessly into it, the two instruments sometimes indistinguishable. Their dialogue carried an imperfect harmony, a reminder that music, like nature, is not about erasing tension but about finding meaning within it.

The concert closed with Dvořák, a composer whose music often exists in a realm of in-between. His work, perfectly selected for the finale, felt like a gentle, liberating exhale. For many, it provided the catharsis that only comes at week's end; for me, it resonated with the breathless start of the semester. After days that already felt like a sprint, the work's surging rhythms and sweeping lines captured both exhaustion and exhilaration, as if the music itself were negotiating the shift from summer's stillness to autumn's urgency. The final notes rang out with both culmination and renewal.

What gave the evening its power was not only the repertoire but the ensemble's synergy. Shao's playing is celebrated for its rich, resonant tone, but what stood out was her capacity to listen. Every glance, every held breath, every pause signaled attunement among the musicians, making this chamber music in its truest form: not a collection of solos, but a dialogue woven from trust and time.

As the audience filtered into the night, there lingered a sense of having been taken somewhere both beyond campus and intimately close. The concert honored the salon tradition while stretching far past it, spanning centuries and continents to tell a story rooted in the present moment. For those at the threshold of another demanding semester, it offered more than beauty; it offered orientation. Through a sound that was at once grounding and transcendent, Shao, Zori and Jokubaviciute gave us not just a concert but a compass, to steady ourselves as we step into the season ahead.

COURTESY PHOTO/KIARA DOOKIE

Sophie Shao & Friends peform in the Olin C. Robinson Concert Hall.

MAKES YA FEEL: SUMMER RECAP

By **ELLIE TRINKLE**
Senior Arts & Culture Editor

Gallery hoppers, Spotify stalkers, bookworms, Letterboxd users and anyone who enjoys art, this is the place for you. Makes Ya Feel highlights art across all of its mediums, small and large-scale, that (you guessed it) makes ya feel!

As the solstice approaches and marks the official end of the summer, I found myself reflecting on my own. My summer was filled with a lot of things, and one being a whole lot of art. I read, watched, listened and everything in between. So, here is my summer roundup: The best of the best and the things that I hope to carry with me into the fall.

My Mother Laughs — Chantal Akerman

This book is a heartbreaking memoir that features Akerman's reflections on the life she has lived, which is set in direct contrast to her mother, who she watches slowly die. Akerman contemplates their connection and how it has seeped into her other relationships. She writes about the pain of feeling regret, while she watches her mother try to live without any traces of it.

Her mother survived Auschwitz but refuses to talk about it, and Akerman constantly feels a strain between them because of her mother's painful past. She juggles not wanting to ask too much from her mother with also wishing to know more about her life in those final moments.

The book is a bit scattered and, at times, feels not quite put together, but it only adds to the emotions Akerman experiences as she attempts to reconcile her mother's life ending, and what that means to her. She writes simply; there is no flair or finesse, it is just her, and the final product reads as deeply intimate and vulnerable.

One of my favorite moments was when Akerman reflected on the concept of time: "When people are enjoying a film they say 'I didn't see the time go by'... but I think that when time flies and you don't see time passing by you are robbed of an hour and a half or two hours of your life. Because all you have in life is time."

It is a novel of deep sadness, but it is also one of significant growth; Akerman is forced to grieve her mother while she is still living, and that process both breaks her and forces her to think about her own life decisions.

THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS/SKILES ROBERTS SALVADOR

Certified Copy — Abbas Kiarostami

This film, a late July rewatch, is set in the breathtaking streets, roads and cafes of Tuscany and is perfect for summer. It stars Juliet Binoche as Elle, a mother and art lover, and William Shimell as James, the author of the esteemed novel "Copia Conforme" (Certified Copy).

The two begin to spend time together, travelling around different parts of Tuscany. While their journey is interesting to watch within the vivid imagery of the beautiful Tuscan surroundings, it is around the one hour mark where the film gets complicated. Similar to James' novel, he and Elle begin to appear as copies of themselves; that is, they look and talk like themselves, but the things they are saying complicate our understanding of who they truly are.

The first time I watched the film, I remember enjoying it but feeling perplexed by what exactly it was getting at. Now, almost three years later, I was able to develop a more solid interpretation. As the physical begins to deceive us — Elle and James morph into characters who seem to directly refute our initial understandings of them — the emotional parts of them seem to reveal what really is.

The film represents complex emotions so wonderfully, in a way I don't think I've ever experienced. It is confusing, but so are the emotions the characters are feeling. It raises interesting ideas about replication, and whether or not a replica can ever be as genuine as the original. The film asks this question, but never quite answers it, making it a puzzle that the viewer has to piece together themselves.

The Passionate Ones — Nourished By Time

Nourished By Time is the brainchild of Baltimore native Marcus Brown. His production is exciting and his music feels like a culmination of all of the sounds I love mixed together in a wholly unique way.

Though this album was released at the tail end of summer, I couldn't put it down during those last few weeks; it fit every scenario I could conjure up. There were three singles released periodically throughout the summer, which I devoured the moment they came out. "Max Potential" was the first single Brown teased. It details feelings of stress that seem to be all- consuming, but then Brown grounds himself through the reminder of all the love that exists around him.

"9 2 5" was released next, and is easily one of my favorites of the entire album. It turns a song about working an unfulfilling job into something danceable and undoubtedly fun. The final single released ahead of the album was "BABY BABY", which centers around global violence and consumerism. It is a powerful portrait of our current world, set behind equally powerful instrumentals and vocals.

A personal favorite was "Automatic Love", the album's opener, which is an upbeat and incredibly touching depiction of love. "Jojo" is a slower track where Brown copes with his past of battling poverty and addiction, and reflects on how far he has come.

The album's final song, the titular "The Passionate Ones", is a perfect end. It details the vulnerability it takes to have deep passions, and the importance of imagining a better future. As my summer came to a close, this track felt like a significant guide into the fall, and a gentle reminder to be present.

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LE PETIT SALON: THE EVOLUTION OF AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PARISIAN ROOM ACROSS BORDERS

By MAYA ALEXANDER
Editor at Large

The gracefully painted, paneled room made in the 18th century for a Parisian mansion, Le Petit Salon, debuted at the Middlebury College Museum of Art on July 8. The exhibition will run until Dec. 7.

Designed by French architect Pierre-Adrien Pâris, the exhibition displays a set of wooden carved panels from a Parisian interior belonging to the Duke of Aumont. The artifacts landed in New York City during the Gilded Age and were gifted to Middlebury in 1959 by Susan Dwight Bliss when she put pieces from her family's Manhattan mansion up for sale.

This is the first time the room has been reassembled in three decades. The panels were once displayed in Le Château but have since been held in storage as of the 1990s. The exhibition also includes loans from Bowdoin College, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum and the Fine Arts Museum of Besançon.

Gabriel Wick, a Paris-based historian and a professor at the NYU Paris campus, curated the exhibit. He also published a catalog in July, which traces the transformation of the salon from France to New York and, ultimately, Middlebury.

Museum Interim Director Katy Smith Abbott and Josephine Rodgers, curator of collections and director of engagement at the museum, worked to bring the exhibition to life alongside Wick. The museum's Sabarsky Graduate Fellow Eloise McFarlane '24.5 has also dedicated her time to researching the exhibit and providing insightful tours to the Middlebury community.

"Le Petit Salon is special in the way that it transports us to another time and place entirely. Rarely do you get to engage with works in a museum in such an immersive way. When you physically step into the room, it's like a portal from rural Vermont to 18th century France," McFarlane wrote in an email to The Campus.

The exhibition runs in tandem with the 100 year anniversary of the Château. Modeled on the Pavillon Henri IV at Le Château de Fontainebleau near Paris, it was the first "maison française" in the country, a house where students pledged to speak only French. It now houses the Lois '51 and J. Harvey Watson Department of French and Francophone Studies, faculty offices, a theater for foreign language productions, classrooms and student housing.

The Department of French and Francophone Studies will host a celebration on Saturday, Sept. 27, which will include visits to the Le Petit Salon exhibition. McFarlane will give tours in both French and English, as she did this past summer.

"We hosted an event for art history students in the French Language School which was awesome. I led a tour in French which was followed by a letter writing event. I love when museum visits are paired with a hands-on component," McFarlane wrote.

The exhibition has come within the first few months of Smith Abbott's new role as interim director. She began her tenure on March 3, bringing a bright and passionate presence to the museum.

In an interview with McFarlane this past May, Smith Abbott expressed a desire to focus on outreach within the Middlebury community.

"'While it is an art museum, I hope that it's a place where people come expecting various forms of cross-disciplinary inquiry. I think a lot about how we can be invitational to students who aren't taking art history classes or don't think of themselves as 'artsy.' I would like to make the museum a place where all students want to spend time, where they meet up with friends or expect to bump into faculty they know from other disciplines," she said.

Courtesy Photo/Middlebury Museum of Art

The 18th century French salon that was replicated for the Middlebury College Museum of Art.

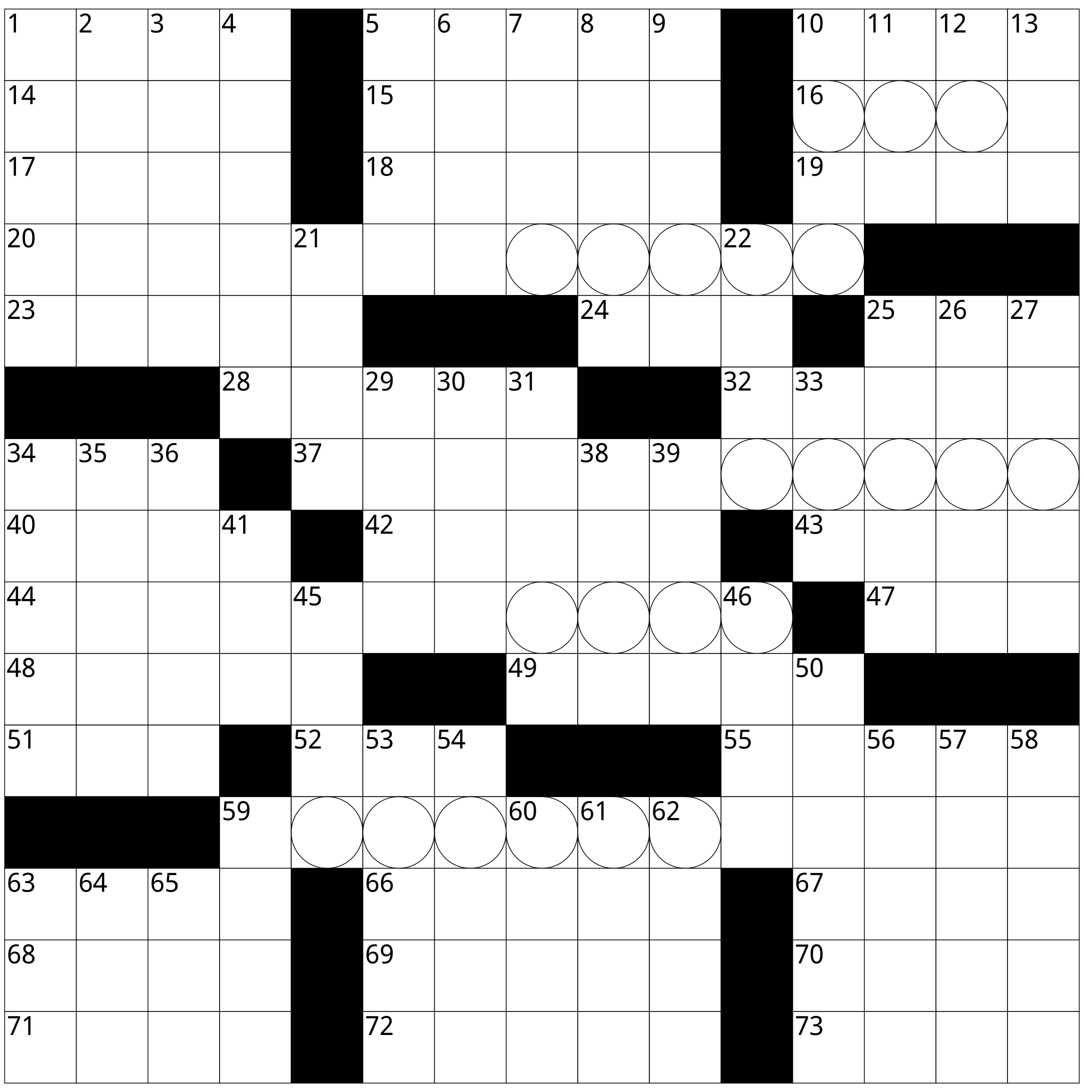
The Le Petit Salon exhibition has done just that: It has fostered a connection across departmental lines, allowing an interdisciplinary conversation between the arts and languages.

Julia Breckenridge '25.5 visited the exhibition over the summer. As an art history major and French minor, she appreciated the intersection of the two disciplines she studies.

"Hopefully it can be the start of more collaboration between the arts and the languages, because I think that's something that Middlebury's kind of losing. It's our root, language and art, and there's such a focus on STEM right now, that I'm excited by this collaboration," she said.

Trade, Build, Settle

Avery Goldstein



ACROSS

1 Try, as a case
5 Baroque musical family
10 "Dogs"
14 Convention center event
15 Little hooter
16 "Milk's Favorite Cookie"
17 500 sheets
18 ___ Loa
19 Leaf-gathering tool
20 One block at a time
23 Razor sharpener
24 Not online, online
25 Starchy tuber
28 Crossroads order
32 Verdi work
34 Jacuzzi feature
37 Weather described by the phrase ‘cats and dogs'
40 Flair
42 Vermont born tractor maker John
43 AI proof exam style
44 Fabric for business attire
47 Foxy
48 Period
49 Phone carrying emotion in "Inside Out 2"
51 Allow
52 Angsty genre
55 "Me and Bobby ___"
59 Night of pillow fights and popcorn
63 Seed for pudding
66 Pan-fry
67 Assign stars to
68 "Charlotte's Web" girl
69 Pulsate painfully
70 Lyft competitor
71 Yoked farm pullers
72 Crochet supplies
73 Bike tire leak sound

DOWN

1 Dill and thyme
2 Apply, as pressure
3 Weak poker hand
4 "Notting Hill" or "You've Got Mail" genre
5 Fail miserably
6 Out of the office
7 Layered sandwich
8 Painter Matisse
9 Single step
10 Utensil for mac and cheese
11 Significant stretch
12 "A mouse!"
13 Little piggy
21 BTS genre
22 Dansko shoe
25 Trips around the sun
26 Google Docs default font
27 Virile
29 Write in Stata or Python
30 Tinted
31 "___ there yet?"
33 Expert
34 Gem
35 Get married in Vegas, say
36 Seer's deck
38 What sharpens itself
39 Very bright
41 Defense advisory gp.
45 Chicago commuter system, familiary
46 Gravy glob
50 Victim of sunburn?
53 Like many attics
54 Nebraska city that was Manning's pre-snap call
56 Snatches
57 Rock or kitchen ending
58 Observers
59 Without
60 Hamilton's slayer
61 George Orwell's alma mater
62 Yanks' foes
63 Fiscal exec
64 Shape of a Catan tile, and a hint to the resources found in the circled letters
65 Wrath

MEN'S SOCCER GRINDS OUT TWO WINS TO START SEASON

By THEO MANIATIS
Sports Editor

As the leaves change colors on campus, the soccer season is in full swing at Middlebury. The eighth-ranked men's soccer team won twice last week in workmanlike fashion: 2–0 over St. Lawrence at home on Tuesday and 1–0 at Trinity on Saturday, courtesy of Hugo Horowitz's '27 dramatic winner.

Crowds dotted the hill overlooking South Street Field last Tuesday as the game kicked off under sunny skies. The Panthers were off to a rapid start, peppering the Saints' net in the first 10 minutes, but could not convert any of their chances into goals.

Middlebury was soon on the score sheet though, with the opening goal coming in the 14th minute. Dylan Payne's '28.5 corner was deflected by the Saints' goalkeeper into the path of Keagan Harder '28, who fired it home for an early lead.

The Panthers maintained control in the second half but still only had their 1–0 lead to show. Then, 62 minutes in, a high arching pass found the foot of a Saints player who gently chipped the ball over goalie Joey Waterman '26. The ball bounced, the crowd held its breath, but it squeaked just wide of the post. Middlebury remained in the lead.

The next significant action came a couple of minutes later, as Pablo Gonzalez '27, a new transfer from UConn, glanced a header inches wide off a corner.

In the 83rd minute, Ari Klayman '27 fired a low, fizzing shot from outside the area. The ball flew past the keeper, doubling Middlebury's advantage as the team entered the closing stages of the match. With a more comfortable lead, players got an opportunity, including sophomore walk-on Theo Haythe '28.

The buzzer finally rang out, marking the end of the game and Middlebury's first NESCAC win of the season.

"I thought it was the best team win we have had in a while," said head coach Alex Elias. "A lot of guys who have been waiting to earn their stripes got their chance and did really well."

The occasion was illuminated by a strong start by rookie midfielder Payne. "We look strong defensively," he said after the game. "We dominated the whole game, but we were just missing that final pass."

It was a solid performance for the Panthers, but their struggles in the final third would be tested again against Trinity — a contest that the Panthers won 9–0 last season.

Saturday's game in Hartford, CT had a distinctly drearier backdrop than Tuesday's match in Middlebury. The balance of play was different as well, with the Bantams starting the game with back-to-back chances.

However, the Panthers soon turned the screw. After six minutes, Payne fired the ball into the upper right corner, but the assistant referee raised his flag: Offside.

Middlebury came close a couple more times in the first half, including when Waterman's throw sent Gavin Randolph '26 scampering down the sideline, crossing it to Harder, who then fired a shot off the crossbar.

COURTESY PHOTO / TOM WOODWARD
Keagan Harder '28 celebrates a goal against St. Lawrence University

The Panthers still could not find the net in the second half, but not for lack of chances. One opportunity came in the 66th minute, as Will Sawin '27 saw the ball drop to him in the penalty area and fired a shot right at Trinity's goalie.

Then, with 16 minutes remaining, Eduardo Casanova '26 lined up a corner to the back post. The ball bounced off a couple players before Horowitz smashed it into the net. The relief was palpable. As Trinity heads drooped, the Panthers wheeled away to the sidelines to celebrate with the team.

With that touch of magic, Middlebury escaped Hartford with a win. The team is now 11-0-3 in its last 14 contests against Trinity dating back to 2014.

The Panthers proved last week they are not a team that gets tossed around. They give away next to nothing at the back and work tirelessly off the ball. Although the offense has not clicked yet, sometimes the difference between a good season and a great one comes down to winning games that do not come easily. Middlebury will face another test this weekend, looking for revenge this Saturday at home against Amherst — the same team who knocked them out of the NCAA tournament last year.

MEN'S GOLF CARDS A TOP-THREE AT DUKE NELSON INVITATIONAL

By KANAN CLIFFORD
Sports Editor

KANAN CLIFFORD / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Charlie Schulman '26 lines up his tee shot on the 9th hole.

As the leaves change colors on campus, the soccer season is in full swing at Middlebury. The eighth-ranked men's soccer team won twice last week in workmanlike fashion: 2–0 over St. Lawrence at home on Tuesday and 1–0 at Trinity on Saturday, courtesy of Hugo Horowitz's '27 dramatic winner.

Crowds dotted the hill overlooking South Street Field last Tuesday as the game kicked off under sunny skies. The Panthers were off to a rapid start, peppering the Saints' net in the first 10 minutes, but could not convert any of their chances into goals.

Middlebury was soon on the score sheet though, with the opening goal coming in the 14th minute. Dylan Payne's '28.5 corner was deflected by the Saints' goalkeeper into the path of Keagan Harder '28, who fired it home for an early lead.

The Panthers maintained control in the second half but still only had their 1–0 lead to show. Then, 62 minutes in, a high arching pass found the foot of a Saints player who gently chipped the ball over goalie Joey Waterman '26. The ball bounced, the crowd held its breath, but it squeaked just wide of the post. Middlebury remained in the lead.

The next significant action came a couple of minutes later, as Pablo Gonzalez '27, a new transfer from UConn, glanced a header inches wide off a corner.

In the 83rd minute, Ari Klayman '27 fired a low, fizzing shot from outside the area. The ball flew past the keeper, doubling Middlebury's advantage as the team entered the closing stages of the match. With a more comfortable lead, players got an opportunity, including sophomore walk-on Theo Haythe '28.

The buzzer finally rang out, marking the end of the game and Middlebury's first NESCAC win of the season.

"I thought it was the best team win we have had in a while," said head coach Alex Elias. "A lot of guys who have been waiting to earn their stripes got their chance and did really well."

The occasion was illuminated by a strong start by rookie midfielder Payne. "We look strong defensively," he said after the game. "We dominated the whole game, but we were just missing that final pass."

It was a solid performance for the Panthers, but their struggles in the final third would be tested again against Trinity — a contest that the Panthers won 9–0 last season.

Saturday's game in Hartford, CT had a distinctly drearier backdrop than Tuesday's match in Middlebury. The balance of play was different as well, with the Bantams starting the game with back-to-back chances.

However, the Panthers soon turned the screw. After six minutes, Payne fired the ball into the upper right corner, but the assistant referee raised his flag: Offside.

Middlebury came close a couple more times in the first half, including when Waterman's throw sent Gavin Randolph '26 scampering down the sideline, crossing it to Harder, who then fired a shot off the crossbar.

The Panthers still could not find the net in the second half, but not for lack of chances. One opportunity came in the 66th minute, as Will Sawin '27 saw the ball drop to him in the penalty area and fired a shot right at Trinity's goalie.

Then, with 16 minutes remaining, Eduardo Casanova '26 lined up a corner to the back post. The ball bounced off a couple players before Horowitz smashed it into the net. The relief was palpable. As Trinity heads drooped, the Panthers wheeled away to the sidelines to celebrate with the team.

With that touch of magic, Middlebury escaped Hartford with a win. The team is now 11-0-3 in its last 14 contests against Trinity dating back to 2014.

The Panthers proved last week they are not a team that gets tossed around. They give away next to nothing at the back and work tirelessly off the ball. Although the offense has not clicked yet, sometimes the difference between a good season and a great one comes down to winning games that do not come easily. Middlebury will face another test this weekend, looking for revenge this Saturday at home against Amherst — the same team who knocked them out of the NCAA tournament last year.

MIDDLEBURY FOOTBALL DEFEATED IN SEASON OPENER TO WESLEYAN

By SIMON SCHMIEDER
Senior Sports Editor

COURTESY PHOTO / ANNA SAWIN
Mike Ahonen '26 drives up the field against Wesleyan

The Middlebury football team opened their season against Wesleyan on Saturday Sept. 13, losing 31–17 to the Cardinals on the road. Middlebury is now 6–4 in their last 10 season-opening games, and it is their second consecutive loss to Wesleyan. Nonetheless, Saturday's matchup was a marked improvement over last year's opener, in which the Panthers lost to Wesleyan 43–7 at home.

Middlebury started strong in their opening drive. The team advanced 74 yards over eight plays, including a 33-yard pass from quarterback Brian Moran '26 to receiver Mike Ahonen '26. The drive ended with a field goal from kicker Tony Wang '26, but the Panthers were unable to add to their score until the third quarter.

Until then, Wesleyan scored 24 unanswered points, including two touchdowns within 1:46 to begin the second half. Down 24–3, the Panthers responded with energy similar to that in their first drive of the game. Moran picked out receiver Jeremy Kiefer '28 for a 26-yard gain, with running back Connor McClellan '28 making the final push for a touchdown to conclude the 75-yard, nine-play drive. After converting the extra point, Middlebury was down by 14 points with one quarter of play remaining.

Late into the game, Moran found Ollie Orvis '26 for a one-yard touchdown, although with Wesleyan having scored earlier in the quarter, it proved too little too late for the Panthers. Regardless, Moran threw for 261 yards on Saturday, bumping him into ninth for career passing 2,416 yards in Middlebury Football program history. His touchdown pass was also the 18th of his career, bringing him up to a tie for eighth with Tiger Lyon '07.

Owen Thornton '26 and Casey Adjei '27 led the defense with seven tackles each. Linebacker Matt Shaw '27 also played an important role on defense, tallying three tackles and two quarterback hurries. Between one field goal and two extra points, Wang also scored a career high of five points.

Saturday's game marked the 55th matchup between the Panther and Cardinal football teams. With a competition history dating back to 1907, Wesleyan holds an advantage of 29-24-2 in the series. Wesleyan has proven to be an especially tricky opponent in recent years, winning the previous three games against Middlebury and five of the last seven. The Panthers will look for an improvement in form as they return to home play next weekend, facing Bowdoin at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 20.

AN ODE TO AUNTIES

JUNE SU / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

My cousin playing with her favorite "milk cow" black-and-white cat in the courtyard.

In my return this year to my parents' motherland, each meal was both an incredible joy and a marathon of appetite. For two weeks at the end of summer, I pilgrimaged to the two sides of the family in China. My father's side lives mostly on the 16th floor of an apartment complex in the Southern metropolis of Guangzhou, Guangdong province. Stray cats and boisterous children congregate under the concrete awnings while elders chatter, fanning themselves beneath sprawling Banyan trees. My mother's side lives in an older, quieter condominium neighborhood in the Northern prefectural city of Changzhi, where a man in a faded blue canvas uniform rings a bell in the evenings for residents to pick up bagged milk, and where after long summer days, people park their mopeds in the alley under powdery yellow lights. In both the north and the south, I felt incredible love through my Aunties' cooking, and ate to new digestive limits to show mine.

Eating Hakka cuisine, I bathe in umami white grain porridges and long-simmered soups, and stir fries with the aroma of julienned ginger and tender green onions. My dad's side is of the Hakka ethnic group and migrated to Guangzhou from the rural north of Guangdong province. Even though "Hakka" literally means "guest people" from our history of displacement and discrimination, Hakkas make up a significant portion of the melting pot of modern Guangzhou.

The revolving glass-top table in front of me gently spins from the gentle drag and lingering fingertips of the family around me. Grainy, wooden chopsticks chime against shiny ceramic bowls of what's in the central cornucopia: Niang [Stuffed] Tou Fu [Tofu],Pi Dan [Century Egg] Shou Rou Zhou [Lean Meat Porridge], an assortment of Qing Cai [referring to a large variety of Chinese greens], and Chao Lian Ou [Stir-Fried Lotus Root], to name a few common dishes.

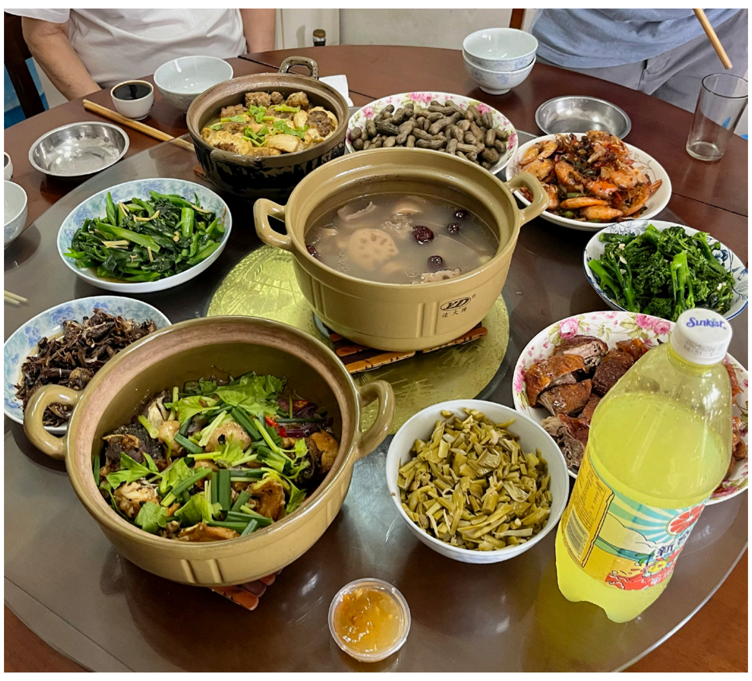
Paired with the beautiful, quarrelsome sound of the Hakka dialect flying around me at the dinner table and the whirring of the rotating fan washing away the thick, tropical air, I know I am home. My aunties whoosh around me, insisting I sit, insisting I eat more, while effortlessly exhibiting a masterclass of cheffery, feeding and caring for a family ranging from nine to 91.

While the same food-worshipping attitude is also par-for-the-course with my family in Changzhi, I am instead indulging in thick dough creations: dumplings, (Xian Bing [Chinese Stuffed Pancake, which I would personally characterize more like a stuffed tortilla/pupusa]), and a fantasyland variety of noodles: fried, soupy, knife-cut, pulled, pressed, long, short, skinny, fat, medium, cold, hot and piping.

I arrived in my grandparents' home in Changzhi to the gorgeous sight of Lu Mian prepared by my eldest aunt: crinkly, thin-cut noodles with meaty, stir-fried green beans and sprinkles of fatty pork belly. With my mom and three aunts, squatting on our red plastic stools next to my grandma's bed in the living room, I make comical yelps of joy, crying to my aunt about how happy I am to be eating her food once more. Blankets with faded Soviet-floral designs glow in the reflection of the sharp noon-time light. The warm smell of cooking oil and the slightly dusty smell of a home well-loved coax me in the fog of my food-coma.

What mental image do my loved ones in China have of me? I imagine and live in an idea of "China" as food and love, food as love, love as food. I've been so lucky to have visited China a dozen times, spending about three weeks each summer. My grandma on my mom's side, spent my toddlerhood with me in the U.S. As a result, I only knew Mandarin until I entered preschool. My eldest aunt never stops reminding me of my tears sending her to the airport at the end of her four-month U.S. stay. I was once the child being fed pureed peaches in a high chair by my grandma, and now I am the grandson (at a Chinese Paul Bunyan height of 5'10) crouching over to spoon yellow-millet porridge, into her dentured mouth. And I'm sure eldest aunt still sees the same bowl-cut donning rat of a six-year-old in me, even though I am now more than three times that age and perhaps more of an obstruction in her small kitchen than a helpful sous chef.

A peek into my aunt's kitchen.



A full Hakka spread.

A busy street near Yong Qing Fanghistoric Guangzhou.

A steamer of goodies: sweet corn, zongzi (sticky rice) with dates, niangao (Chinese pan-seared mochi), and eggs.

Dinner featuring my aunt's xianbing (Chinese pupusa) and congyoubing (fried green onion tortilla).

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